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TO/COMPANY:	FAX/PHONE:
Louis Huynh	571 273-4462

FROM: Peter T. deVore Telephone #: 703 838 6544 Date 7/7/2009
Reference No. 10/551,034

Additional Comments or Instructions:

Dear Examiner Huynh:

Attached are proposed claim amendments I would like to discuss during our interview scheduled for July 8, 2009 at 2 P.M.

Regards,
Pete deVore

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1. (Currently Amended) A unit for applying opening devices to packages of pourable food products having a rupturable portion, the unit comprising:

a first conveyor for feeding said packages successively along a first path; and

a second conveyor carrying gripping means for receiving said opening devices at a pickup station, and which gripping means move cyclically between said pickup station and an application station and said second conveyor having a trajectory interfacing with said first path and where the opening devices are applied to respective said packages;

wherein a trajectory of said gripping means from said application station to said pickup station is distinct from said first path, and wherein the unit also comprises a third conveyor carrying pressure means along a second path, said third conveyor having a trajectory interfacing with said first path along at least a portion [[from]] at said application station, said pressure means generating a contact pressure between said packages and said opening devices along at least said portion of said first path.

2. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said pressure means comprise a number of pressure members, which act on respective said opening devices to press them onto respective said packages in a direction crosswise to a feed plane of the packages along said first path.

3. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in Claim 2, wherein each said pressure member comprises a support integral with said third conveyor; and an actuating member fitted to said support to move along an axis perpendicular to the feed plane of said packages along said first path, and which is movable between a work

position, in which it acts on a relative said opening device to keep it pressed on the relative said package, and a rest position, in which it is detached from said opening devices.

4. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in Claim 3, wherein said gripping means define at least one seat for retaining a relative said opening device, and which is open on both sides in a direction parallel to said axis of movement of each said actuating member, and on the trailing side in the traveling direction of the gripping means from said application station to said pickup station.

5. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in claim 3, wherein said pressure means comprise control means for moving said actuating members into said work position along said portion of said first path, and into said rest position along the rest of said second path.

6. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in Claim 5, wherein, for each said pressure member, said control means comprise first elastic means for loading the relative said actuating member into said work position; and retaining means fitted to the relative said support to move between a disabling position retaining said actuating member in said rest position in opposition to said first elastic means, and an enabling position allowing said actuating member to move into said work position.

7. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed In Claim 6, wherein said support of each said pressure member comprises a hollow body having an open end portion facing said packages and housing the relative said actuating member and said first elastic means; said retaining means of each said pressure member comprising a movable member fitted to the relative said support to move in a direction crosswise to said axis of movement of the relative said actuating member, and which interferes with said open end portion of the relative said hollow body in said disabling position to prevent the actuating member from being moved into the work position by said first elastic means.

8. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in Claim 7, wherein each said movable member is loaded by second elastic means into said disabling position; and in that said control means comprise interacting means located at said application station and acting on each said movable member, in opposition to the relative said second elastic means and as the relative said pressure member travels along said portion of said first path, so as to move the movable member into said enabling position.

9. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in Claim 5, comprising fixed guide means located at an end portion of said portion of said first path, and interacting with an actuating portion of each said actuating member to restore the actuating member to said rest position in opposition to said first elastic means.

10. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in Claim 5, comprising damping means located at said application station and interacting with each said actuating member being moved into said work position by said first elastic means, to control the impact of the actuating member on the relative said opening device.

11. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in Claim 10, wherein said damping means comprise a rocker arm hinged at an intermediate point about an axis crosswise to the axis of movement of each said actuating member, and having a first end portion located at said application station and along the trajectory of a portion of the actuating member, and a second end portion loaded by a damper.

12. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in claim 4, wherein said pressure means comprise control means for moving said actuating members into said work position along said portion of said first path, and into said rest position along the rest of said second path.

13. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in Claim 6, comprising fixed guide means located at an end portion of said portion of said first path, and interacting with an actuating portion of each said actuating member to restore the actuating member to said rest position in opposition to said first elastic means.

14. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in Claim 7, comprising fixed guide means located at an end portion of said portion of said first path, and interacting

with an actuating portion of each said actuating member to restore the actuating member to said rest position in opposition to said first elastic means.

15. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in Claim 8, comprising fixed guide means located at an end portion of said portion of said first path, and interacting with an actuating portion of each said actuating member to restore the actuating member to said rest position in opposition to said first elastic means.

16. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in Claim 6, comprising damping means located at said application station and interacting with each said actuating member being moved into said work position by said first elastic means, to control the impact of the actuating member on the relative said opening device.

17. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in Claim 7, comprising damping means located at said application station and interacting with each said actuating member being moved into said work position by said first elastic means, to control the impact of the actuating member on the relative said opening device.

18. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in Claim 8, comprising damping means located at said application station and interacting with each said actuating member being moved into said work position by said first elastic means, to control the impact of the actuating member on the relative said opening device.

19. (Previously Presented) A unit as claimed in Claim 9, comprising damping means located at said application station and interacting with each said actuating member being moved into said work position by said first elastic means, to control the impact of the actuating member on the relative said opening device.

20. (Currently Amended) A unit for applying opening devices to packages of pourable food products having a rupturable portion, the unit comprising:

a conveyor for feeding the packages successively along a linear path;

a plurality of grippers rotatable about a common axis so that the grippers move along a circular path from a pickup station at which each gripper receives one of the opening devices to an application station and said plurality of grippers having a trajectory interfacing with the linear path and at which the opening device is applied to one of the packages; and

a movable pressure member separate from the grippers and movable along at least a portion of the linear path including the application station to press the opening device against the package during the feeding of the package.